



THE

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COINS! COINS! COINS! AND MORE COINS!

The Bank of Lithuania ended the year 1998 with the spectacular release of several new coins from the Mint of Lithuania, including the reissuance of the 1, 2, and 5 litai denomination coins into circulation.

On Monday, December 21, 1998, the new coins were placed into circulation, designed to replace their banknote counterparts that had been issued in late 1993 and early 1994. By December, these low-denomination banknotes accounted for more than 40% of the banknotes in circulation in Lithuania, and their supply had become worn and depleted.

The 1-2-5 litas banknotes had originally been placed into circulation because people were complaining that the 1991-dated coins of the same denominations were too similar in size and color to their centas denomination counterparts, thus causing much confusion in the marketplace. The litas was reintroduced into Lithuania in June, 1993.

The new 1998-dated coins are of larger sizes than their 1991-dated predecessors, and are easily distinguishable. No 1, 2, or 5 centai coins are circulating in Lithuania today. The 10 centų is now the lowest denomination in circulation. Thus Lithuania's circulation coinage has been entirely replaced, redesigned, and resized within the past two years.

The new litas coins were designed by Arvydas Každailis (obverse/Vytis side) and Antanas Žukauskas (both sides), and were struck at the Lithuanian Mint.

The cupro-nickel 1 litas coin is 22.3 mm. in diameter, weighs 6.25 grams, and is 2.20 mm. thick. This is similar to the commemorative 1 litas cupro-nickel coin issued in 1997 on the bank's 75th anniversary.

The obverse features the contemporary Vytis emblem in the center. The year "1998"



ABOVE: New cupro-nickel 1 litas (top); and bi-metallic 2 (center) and 5 (bottom) litai coins issued for circulation on December 21.

appears on the bottom, while "LIETUVA" appears as the top legend. The rim is plain. The edge of the coin is reeded.

The reverse features the numeral "1" in a hollowed circle area in the center. Under the circle are ornamental curved bars. The word "LITAS" appears horizontally on the bottom. The rim is plain. (Continued on page 2...)

The 2 and 5 litai issues have attracted the attention of not only Lithuanian collectors, but of worldwide collectors as well. They are bi-metallic, a first for Lithuanian coinage.

The 2 litai coin measures 25 mm. in diameter, weighs 7.50 grams, and is 2.20 mm. thick. The 17 mm. diameter inner cupro-nickel core is surrounded by a gold-yellowish color brass (copper, aluminum and nickel) alloy forming the outer ring.

The legend "LIETUVA" appears in the outer ring, with the date "1998" below on the obverse. The Vytis emblem appears inside the cupro-nickel center, except for the hoofs of the horse (both front and back) which protrude into the brass area. The rim of the coin is plain.

The reverse features a large "2" in the center, with "LITAI" horizontally below. The outer ring bears a design of two groups of curved bars which symmetrically appear in the lower half of the coin, except for the bottom where there is a 5 mm. gap. The edge contains five 21-lined reeded sets, separated by five 2 mm. dividers of plain edges. The reeds are not all of the same thickness, those in the center of each set are thicker and wider than those at the ends.

The 5 litai is the biggest of the trio, and measures 27.50 mm. in diameter. It weighs 10.10 grams, and is 2.35 mm. thick. This coin's composition is opposite of the 2 litai. The 5 litai has a cupro-nickel outside, with an 18.5 mm. brass core. The obverse design is the same as the 2 litai.

The reverse contains a large numeral "5" in the center, with "LITAI" found horizontally below. The cupro-nickel outer core bears three sets of curved ornamental lines, separated by a 7 mm. plain area.

The edge of the 5 litai contains the inscription "PENKI LITAI" which appears twice. The inscription is separated by a 6-pointed star which appears twice.

The month of December began with the release by the Bank of Lithuania of a new .925 50 litų silver proof coin honoring Grand Duke Algirdas. This coin is the third of a scheduled series of coins honoring Lithuania's medieval rulers.

The specifications are as follows: Diameter:

34 mm., weight, 23.30 gr. Mintage: 4,000. Designers: Giedrius Paulauskis and Antanas Žukauskas.

The obverse features the Vytis emblem in the center frosted area, with the legend around the rim stating, "LIETUVA 50 LITŲ." The date "1998" appears under the Vytis, while the mintmark "LMK" appears under the front legs of the horse. On each center end appears the double arrow insignia emblem which is found on Algirdas' official seal.

The reverse depicts is adapted from the 1975 medal of Algirdas made by Lithuanian sculptor Vytautas Kašuba, then living in New York City.

It depicts a frosted Algirdas facing forward.

Algirdas is shown in chain mail, holding a sceptre with the image of a double-barred cross on the top. The legend states, "ALGIRDAS. DIDYSIS. LIETUVOS. KUNIGAİKŠTIS," meaning, "Algirdas the Great, Grand Duke of Lithuania." The years of his reign, "1345-1377" appear below the sceptre to the right of the seal.



The edge of the coin is inscribed with the same inscription as appeared on the earlier issued Mindaugas and Gediminas commemorative coins: "IŠ PRAEITIES TAVO SŪNŪS TE STIPRYBĘ SEMIA," meaning, "May Your Sons Derive Their Strength From the Past."

A brochure issued by the Bank of Lithuania to publicize the coin contained a three paragraph synopsis of the biography of Algirdas by Dr. Alvydas Nikžentaitis. It states:

Algirdas was the son of Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and father of Jogaila, the king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. He fostered a hope to incorporate Russian lands into Lithuania and was the originator of the Russian policy conception in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Algirdas' reign saw the intensive expansion of the Lithuanian state into the lands of Russia. Algirdas subjugated the Duchy of Smolensk and

(Continued on page 7...)

Lithuanian collectors have a wide variety of items to choose from which to collect. One specialty is medals, and the top medalist in Lithuanian numismatics was Petras Rimša (1881-1961). His works not only depict Lithuanian history, but are excellent examples of Lithuanian folk art, motifs, and designs. We have previously featured Rimša medals in *The Knight*, but for our newer members we thought we would expose them to one of the works of this great medalist.

In this writer's own personal collection, he has two Rimša medals, a small 35 mm. bronze Klaipėda medal, and a silver-wash Congress of Vilnius medal. I have always admired Rimša's medals. A year or so ago when working on my own family genealogy, I discovered that my great-great-grandfather, Stanislovas Tautavičius, married an Elėna Rimša, around the year 1820.

Their daughter Marijona (b. 1824) married Simonas Vazgirda/Vosgird, whose daughter Julijona (1859-ca1911) was the mother of my grandfather, Nikodemas Kulakauskas. Although I am probably not related to the great medalist, I do have a Rimša in my genealogical background (my ancestors were from the Varniai area) giving me an added incentive to collect Rimša medals. Perhaps you might have such a story as to why you collect certain Lithuanian items.

Below is an example of a Rimša medal, taken from my article entitled "The Medals of Petras Rimša" which appeared in the May, 1983 issue of *The Numismatist*.

In 1252 the Livonian Order invaded western Lithuania, reached the Courish Lagoon and erected a stronghold on the site of a native Lithuanian village. Pope Innocent IV noted in 1253 that the stronghold had clearly been built in Lithuanian territory. Renamed "Memelburg," the city was a source of boundary conflicts between Lithuania and the Teutonic knights and other warring factions for many centuries. After World War I, the Klaipėda region was placed under Allied control and Lithuanians feared the city would be returned to the Germans or taken over by Poland. In January 1923, the Lithuanians staged an insurrection and successfully regained the city.

Known mintages: 10,000 specimens were struck in 1927, some 60 millimeters in diameter and the remainder 35 millimeters. In addition, two personal editions were issued.

Obverse: Shown is a Lithuanian of the Klaipėda district (right) calling to arms a volunteer of independent Lithuania (left). The center depicts the defender of Lithuania receiving a sword from a patriotic woman, with the city in the background. Surrounding this is the inscription, KAS MUSU KOVA IGYSIM, which translates "that which is ours we shall fight to retain." In the left oval is the Vytis emblem, opposite is the coat-of-arms of the city. The bottom contains a sword pointed upward, with the words, I—9 KLAIPĖDA 1923, referring to January 9, 1923, when the call for help went out. A wreath of oak leaves surrounds the design, and the emblem of the Lithuanian National Guard, the double-barred cross, appears above.

Reverse: Shown is Klaipėda after reunification. Major Lithuania (left) joins hands with Minor Lithuania (right), representing unity of the land and waters of Lithuania. In the center, the defender has returned, and is being bestowed with the laurel wreath of victory and honor. At the bottom is a downward pointing sword with the inscription I—19 KLAIPĖDA 1923, signifying the day of the insurrection. Below are twigs from the Lithuanian national flower, the ruta (rue). In the left oval is a sailboat, symbolic of the recreation of the area; opposite is placed a rake and plow, symbolic of the industry and agriculture of the area. At the top of the medal is the Order of the Cross of Vytis, Lithuania's highest military order for honorable service at that time. The legend reads ISKOVOTA—MYLET MOKESIM, which means "that which we have regained, we will know how to cherish." Rimša later issued another version of the medal with the inscription AMZIUS BUDEJE LAISVE LAIMEJOM, which translates "having waited for ages, we won freedom." Specimens with the alternate inscription also bear the date I—20 on the bottom, signifying the day victory was achieved. The obverse of the later version bears the inscription VADUOKIS PATS, IR BUSI LAISVAS, which means "save yourself, and you will be free."



4. 15th to 17th CENTURY COANHOARD FROM THE GEGUŽINE
VILLAGE (Jonava District).

By Vytautas Aleksiejūnas

[From Works of Young Historians. Scientific
Presentations of Young Historians of the Republic,
May 29, 1984. Book Four. Vilnius, 1984. Submitted
to the LNA by Zigmas Raulinaitis. Translated into
English by Aleksandras Radžius]

In June of 1984 a coin hoard was discovered at the Gegužine Village (Jonava District). About 2,285 coins, over 90% of the find found its way into the numismatic section of the Lithuanian Ethnographic Museum. What is different about this find is that the hoard was in two vessels of beaten copper. Larger denomination coins were placed into the smaller vessel (15 cm. diameter, 4.5 cm. high), and the smaller denomination coins were in the larger vessel (15 cm. diameter, 11 cm. high). It is rare that a hoard is hidden away in two vessels. The depth that the hoard was dug into the earth was typical, 30 cm. The coins found were between the late 15th century and 1643.

The hoard consisted of coins of these countries: Lithuania, Poland, Lithuania-Poland, Brandenburg-Prussia, Prussia, Pomerania, Russia, Sweden, Riga, and Elbliong under Swedish occupation, Denmark, and Spain (Table 1).

The hoard clearly reflects the inflow of foreign coins into the Lithuanian money markets. Most of the coins in the hoard are Polish and Brandenburg-Prussian coins. A somewhat smaller portion consists of coins minted in Riga and Elbliong. on the other hand, Lithuanian coins (64 pieces) make up an insignificant portion of the hoard. Also, present in the hoard were coins that were very common at the time, large denomination coins that were minted in Denmark and in the Spanish colonies of Central America. The hoard also reflects the lack of stability in Sweden, the coins of Elbliong have a low silver content. The hoard consists mainly of denominations that were popular at the time, 1 1/2 groschen coins and orts (ort= 1/4 taler).

Table 1.

	Country, ruler	dates of reign	denomination	number
1	Lithuania Alexander Sigismund the Elder Sigismund August Sigismund Vasa	1492-1506 1506-1548 1544-1572 1587-1632	halfgroschen halfgroschen halfgroschen shillings groschen	4 9 18 6 27
2	Poland Sigismund Vasa (Danzig) Sigismund Vasa	1587-1632 1587-1632	1 1/2 groschen 6 groschen ort groschen ort	786 12 54 15 24
3	Lithuania-Poland (Riga) Sigismund Vasa	1587-1632	shilling	3
4	Brandenburg-Prussia George Wilhelm	1540-1588	shilling 1 1/2 groschen ort	219 104
5	Prussia John Sigismund	1608-1618	groschen	1
6	Pamerania Ulrich (Darlov) Boguslav XIV	1618-1622 1620-1637	groschen groschen	2 1
7	Russia Ivan IV and Michael Flodorovich	1534-1584 1611-1645	kopecks	677
8	Sweden Gustav Adolph	1611-1632	ere	1
9	Sweden (Riga, Elbliong) Gustav Adolph and Christina	1611-1632 1632-1654	shillings groschen 1 1/2 groschen three groschen	77 3 215 2
10	Denmark Christian IV	1588-1648	8 shillings 1 mark	3 5
11	Spain		reale 2 reale 4 reale 8 reale	1 5 3 7

(Continued on page 10....)

LITHUANIAN MILITARY HISTORY BOOK PUBLISHED

LNA Member Henry L. Gaidis has written a new book, *A History of the Lithuanian Military Forces in World War II 1939-1945*. The book is 300 pages in length and was published by the Lithuanian research and Studies Center, 5600 South Claremont Avenue, Chicago, IL 60636-1039. Copies may be ordered from the publisher. Cost of the book is \$28.50 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

The book is 300 pages in length in English, and contains 26 pages of photos, maps, and documents.

The text gives a brief history of the modern day Lithuanian Army since it's 1918 founding, a description of its military and political structure during the 1940 Soviet occupation, the 1941 Nazi invasion, the Lithuanian war front, the Second 1944 Soviet occupation, and the subsequent 1944-1956 Lithuanian partisan struggle.

Gaidis covers just about all of the Lithuanian formations during the World War II period, including those serving in the Russian, German, Polish, British, and American forces.

Gaidis writes, "This book contains all anyone ever wants to know about what happened in Lithuania during World War II in the English language. As far as I know, this is the first work on the topic, and in English."

Gaidis further writes, "The text also gives a neutral version of the 1941-1944

A HISTORY OF THE ~~LITHUANIAN MILITARY~~ FORCES IN WORLD WAR II 1939-1945

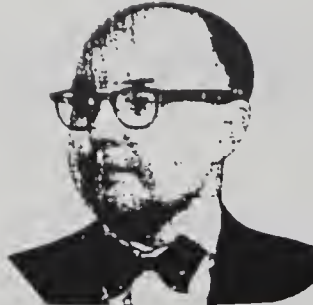


HENRY L. GAIDIS

Jewish exterminations in Lithuania which is almost always presented giving a Jewish slant that condemns the Lithuanians. In fact, the main purpose of the book was to counter the numerous falsehoods that have been presented covering this topic by the OSI, Jewish lobby, etc."

With the collector in mind, Gaidis also makes reference to the uniforms, insignias, etc. worn by the Lithuanian units throughout the text.

It is good to see more books published in the English language about Lithuanian history. This surely will become a standard reference source in years to come.

By
Jonas K. Karys 43.English translation by
V.L.G. Matelis

Continued from last issue....

PETRULIS. VYTAUTAS (1890-1942). An economist, former member of the Senate of Independent Lithuania, Prime Minister, Finance Minister. In 1922, he successfully inaugurated the Litas denomination in Lithuania, and through his efforts, the first new, national coins of our Republic were struck in England in 1925.

PEZAS/Peso. A. At first, a unit of silver weight (about 1 ounce) in Spain. Later, in the 16th century there was introduced a silver coin of the taler class, valued at 8 reales. B. A monetary unit = 100 centavos in Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, Mexico, the Phillippines, and Uruguay. There it is composed of 100 centesimi.

PEZETA/Peseta. Spain's monetary unit of 100 centimes, replacing the excudo in 1868, and like it, a silver and later bronze coin.

PFENIGAS/Pfennig (Old English penning, German penig, pfenning, pfennig). From the monetary reform of 1871, it represents 0.01 of a German mark. The Reichsmark, or otherwise named, the German monetary unit, the mark. A similar part of circulating in Lithuania at the end of the first world war, called ost-mark, and in 1923, introduced into the free city of Danzig as a gulden. In Germany, the pfenning developed from the dinar, and at first was a silver coin, but in the 16th century, Westphalia began to strike it in copper, and about the middle of the 18th century it was being struck from copper in almost all the German states. In modern times, the pfennig denomination coin is struck in bronze, copper, aluminum and zinc.

PIASTRAS/Piaster. 1. The silver taler class coin peso was so-called popularly in Europe, Spain, and in Spanish American parts. With such a name, or at least called such, coins were struck in the 17th and 18th centuries in Denmark for its East indies companies convenience, by Frederick the Great for the German colonies, and for the French 19th century trade, "piaster de commerce." 2. It was the 0.01 part of the Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Lybian monetary unit, the lire and pound. 3. Coins so-called of various metals in the 19th and 20th centuries: in Cyprus, Egypt, Indo-China, Lebanon, Libia, the Sudan, Syria, Tunis, and Turkey.

PIEDFORT (French). A very large, thick, unorganized piece of metal, in which a coin's design has been struck in one way or another. Most often, a sample metal bar, trial pieces for dies to be used on coins, or in specimens. Piedfort, the name arose in France. There, piedfort's in billon go back to the days of Louis VII (12th century). We need piedforts in silver and gold in the 14th and 15th centuries. They were also known in the middle ages in Bohemia, holland, and with the Germans. The basic reasons for the piedfort, a regulation to inspect, to exhibit, while with the French, it was even a prized gift.

PIGIEJI METALAI/Base Metals. Those so-called in numismatics are nickel, copper, zinc, aluminum, iron, etc. All those metals used in the mint which are not classed as precious metals.

PILNAVERTĖ MONETA/Full Valued Coin. (par) Are those coins whose constituent metals equal the market value. Such coins are ordinarily produced from precious metals, though there have been unusual coppers.

PINIGAI/Money. (Latin, manoma). First of all, the synonym for coins, since the genuine, especially the full-valued coin, has been with us for centuries, and in some places is till held today, in the full meaning of the word, money. On the other hand, other "monies:" A) The older, more primitive "moneys" were occasional, often short-term valuables, without sustained and concrete actual value in exchange and only sometimes means of payment. B. The more modern, of cheap substance (paper, credit cards) remain only "money symbols" of a certain type, representing and surrogate for values kept elsewhere and not in circulation. What in truth is money, is something not yet finally determined. The debates of economists on the subject are not yet ended. Still, judging from its functions, we can state that they are: intermediary of exchanges (as it has been for ages): b. measures of value; c. payments; reckoning of wealth and loans; an inventorying of wealth and capital, and means of changing them. In coin history, money and symbols of money were issued by: merchants, towns, noblemen, leaders, dukes, etc. In modern times, the issuance of money has been firmly controlled by governments. It is not important to whom the government entrusts the production of money, its issuance and control, so long as the government guarantees its credit, paper symbols and subsidiary coins become legal and acceptable money. (Continued next issue...)

COINS! AND MORE COINS!

(Continued from page 2....)

reinforced his power in the Duchy of Kiev. The influence of Algirdas' reign was felt in the northern Russian lands of Novogorod and Pskov. In order to restrain the influence of Moscow in the Russian lands annexed by Lithuania, Algirdas had even established an independent Orthodox Church Metropolis, though it existed for a very short time. In the negotiations with the German Emperor and the king of the Czechs in 1358, Algirdas requested to withdraw the Crusaders' Order from Prussia and convey a part of the Lithuanian lands annexed by the Order to the State of Lithuania.

The first Medieval towns were developing rapidly in the reign of Algirdas. Vilnius became famous as a center of miscellaneous culture. Germans, Russians and others settled down in Vilnius beside Lithuanian citizens. Standards of the behavior common to the Western European knights were spreading among the nobility of Lithuania, although the Lithuanian society was still influenced by Orthodox culture. Lithuania remained a pagan country over the years of Algirdas' reign, nevertheless it became a mighty force, without participation of which major problems of Central and Eastern Europe could not be settled.

A NEW 50 LITŲ BANKNOTE

[From Lietuvos Žinios, December 12, 1998, No. 154.

Translated into English by Aleksandras Radžius]

The Bank of Lithuania placed into circulation on Monday [December 7] a new 50 litų banknote which, according to the directors of the bank, "has especially good safeguards and is practically counterfeit-proof."

Background. The first 50 litų notes issued after WWII were printed in 1991, when the litas was reinstated in Lithuania. However, at that time, the quality of the notes was not acceptable to the Bank of Lithuania because the watermarks were printed in a manner similar to that used in current single-use trolley car or bus tickets. Thus the notes were easily counterfeitable. For this reason, in 1993 new notes were printed. But, Bank officials now admit that even these were not perfect. Thus, this year it was decided to print new notes which the counterfeiters will not be able to duplicate.

According to Arūnas Dulkys, Director of the Disbursement Department, "there has not been a note issued in the history of Lithuanian numismatics that was so well protected."

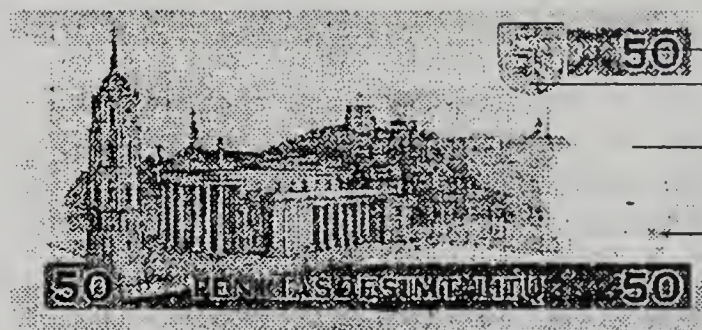
Differences. At the news conference on Friday, he said that the composition of the paper is

known only to the Bank of Lithuania. The printing firm in Munich (Germany) which printed the Lithuanian notes also prints the German mark notes, which are considered to be one of the best safeguarded banknotes in the world.

Although the design of the obverse and the reverse of the new notes is the same as the old notes, the new notes differ from its predecessors. For the first time, the watermark on a Lithuania note is a portrait. Until now, all post WWII banknotes had the same watermark, the Vytis [sic, the 200 litų portrays Vydūnas as the watermark--editor] making the work for counterfeiters easier. Also, for the first time in the history of Lithuanian banknotes, a micro-thread will be used half of



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which will be at the surface and half imbedded in the paper. Under ultraviolet light, each of its elements will shine with a different color. The text of the micro-thread is demetalized and cannot be eliminated.

50 litų notes currently comprise 10 percent of the total banknotes in circulation, 100 litai notes, 49 percent, 200 litai notes, about 30 percent. The 1991 and 1993 issue 50 litų notes will circulate together with the new notes. The older notes will be taken out of circulation when they become worn out.

[Editor's note: The view of the Cathedral of Vilnius and the nearby Bell tower is depicted at a slightly different angle than on previous notes. Also, the illustration given in the paper shows the note beginning with the series letters "AE."]

TRANSLATORS NEEDED

Our LNA editor is in need of several persons to translate Lithuanian numismatic articles into English for *The Knight*. Lots of interesting articles awaiting your help. If you or your Lithuanian neighbor friends could help reduce the backlog, please contact me. The success of the LNA depends upon you our members. F. Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224.

MUSEUM ACQUIRES EARLY VICTOR DAVID BRENNER MEDAL

By Frank Passic, Albion, Michigan

The Balzekas Museum has recently acquired an early medal designed by the acclaimed sculptor Victor David Brenner (1871-1924). The medal is a gold-plated "discovery piece" of a previously listed design. It was obtained from Michigan numismatic dealer Bill Swoger who graciously alerted the Museum to its existence.

Victor David Brenner was born June 12, 1871 in Šiauliai, one of Lithuania's major cities. He was the son of Jewish parents, George and Sara (Margolis) Brenner. The elder Brenner was an engraver, die-maker, and stone cutter who carved stone monuments, ornaments, and silhouettes. George's father had been a blacksmith. Victor grew up in Šiauliai, learning the trade of his father.

Victor moved to Kaunas at the age of 16 where he was employed as a seal cutter. While there he was accused of counterfeiting an official governmental seal, which got him into trouble with the Russian Czarist police. Rather than be sent to Siberia, Brenner fled to the United States virtually penniless. He arrived in New York City on May 7, 1890.

He became employed as a die-cutter and as a badge engraver, and began studying art and taking classes. He worked during the daytime, but in the evening would attend classes at the Cooper Union, and at the Art Student's League. The money he earned helped Victor to finance the way to bring several members of his family to the United States.

In 1892, Brenner began designing the first of over 120 medallion designs bearing his name. His most significant of course was his 1907 bronze plaque bust of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, which was used two years later in the design for our new Lincoln cent which Brenner authored. Brenner based his Lincoln bust on an 1864 photograph of the President taken by Anthony Berger, gallery manager for Matthew Brady. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was posing for Brenner at his studio in 1908 for the Panama Canal Service Medal. He noticed the Lincoln plaque and was very impressed with it. Roosevelt instructed his Secretary of the Treasury, George B. Cortelyou to use Brenner's Lincoln image for the new cent project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth in 1909.

The Lincoln cent was minted beginning in 1909. Brenner's initials "V.D.B" appeared on the bottom of the "wheat ears" reverse, but were removed beginning in March, 1909 after officials yielded to jealous objections from other prominent artists of the time who felt Brenner had placed his initials in a too prominent location. The initials were restored however in 1918, minutely incused in the slanted area at the 7 o'clock position under Lincoln's jacket.



Brenner established his own workshop in New York in 1894. His early works caught the attention of other sculptors, and with some philanthropic financial help, Brenner traveled to Paris, France in 1898 for three years. There he studied under medallists Alexandre

Charpentier and Louis Oscar Roty. Brenner furthered his skills of medallic art and coin design. He studied and worked at the Julian Academy with such artists as Peuch, Verlet and Dubois. He participated in numerous exhibitions where he won awards for his works. After briefly returning to New York and then studying again in Paris in 1904 under Roty, Brenner returned to New York in 1906 where he remained for the rest of his career. He subsequently was commissioned by numerous organizations and institutions through the years to produce various anniversary or commemorative medals and awards.

Of special interest are Brenner's pre-Paris medallic works, which although few in number, are a better reflection of the skills he learned in his homeland, Lithuania. A descriptive listing of the works of Brenner by Glenn B. Smedley published in *The Numismatist* in July, and August 1983 reveal that Brenner designed only a handful medallic pieces in his first years in the United States before he went to Paris and furthered his skills.

The piece recently acquired by the Balzekas Museum was designed by Victor David Brenner in 1894 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer in New York City. Smedley lists bronze and white metal varieties in his listing. The Museum's piece is an original gold-wash version on white metal. Oval in shape and measuring 38 x 45 mm., the design is listed as "No. 4" by Smedley.

Obverse description: A view of the church appears in the center. On it's slanted base is the text, "D. BRENNER" and "FECIT N.Y." Notice that Brenner did not use the initial "V" for his first name Victor here. One might wonder as to the reason for this, as "V.D. Brenner" appears on most of his other works, including his first 1892 medal. This is a strange anomaly which only occurs only on a few of his medals, and adds to the historical significance of this piece.

The outer legend reads, "CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER, 173 E. THIRD ST. NEW YORK CITY." The inner legend reads in Latin and English, "GOLDENES JUBILUM GOLDEN JUBILEE." The anniversary dates "1844-1894" are positioned horizontally below the base of the church. The top of the medal is knobbed with a hole to place a ribbon clasp.

Reverse description: Christ is depicted bearing a cross, with a religious shield and seal containing a cross and an All-Seeing Eye. The German legend reads, "O GUTIGSTER ERLOSER ERBARME DICH UNSER," meaning, "O Most Holy Redeemer, Have Mercy On Us." The designer's initials "D.B." are found to the left of the base of the cross, while the initials "N.Y." appear just above the knee on the right.

Brenner was a member of numerous artist organizations, including the National Sculpture Society, and the Architectural League of New York. He also was a member of the American Numismatic Society. Brenner married Ann Reeb in New York in 1913. He died on April 5, 1924 after an illness of several years. At the time of his death he was survived by his wife, his mother, a sister Miriam, and three brothers: Morris, Samuel, and Michael.

In his short lifetime however Brenner produced a multitude of works which are cherished today. His detailed perfection attracted the attention of the contemporaries of his day, and he left a legacy which will not be forgotten. The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago has several of Brenner's early 20th century works in its medallic art collection, but none match the historical significance as this early Brenner work produced in 1894.

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VISITING LITHUANIA THIS YEAR?

Your editor is always looking for members who are visiting Lithuania in order to obtain current coins and banknotes for him and other LNA members and avoid all the hassles, surcharges, delays, and mailing uncertainties.

If you are going to Lithuania this year, please let me know. Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224.

LETTERS

My name is Uroš Gams, Čečovje 43-D; 2390 Ravne Na Koroškem, SLOVENIA. I am a boy of 15 years of age. My hobbies are collecting coins of the world. I would like to obtain some coins of Lithuania. Please write me.

I got in touch with the Lietuvos Bankas. The 500 and 1,000 litų banknotes will probably be placed into circulation sometime next year [1999], after the disputes with the printers (American Banknote Company) are resolved regarding some printing faults. This is on-going.

--Anthony Grina, Bensenville, IL.

GEGUŽINE HOARD (Continued from page 4...)

Based on the silver content of a taler from the 1640s it was calculated that the hoard could be valued at 100 talers. At that time a bull would have cost 9 talers. Thus, the hoard would have bought about 10 bulls. Since about 70% of the hoard consisted of large denomination coins, it is speculated that the owner of the hoard might have been a rich tradesman or merchant.

Being on the banks of the Neris River, the village was in a good location to foster the exchange of goods and money. The Gegužine village was first mentioned in the Lithuanian Metrica in 1511 when it was granted the right to hold a market and to open an inn. And the frequent wars between feudal states made the earth a natural hiding place for coins.

The hoard at the Gegužine village provides a reflection of the coins that were in circulation at the time. Based on its intrinsic value, this hoard is one of the largest hoards from the 15th to 17th century that have been found in Lithuania.

WANT-ADS

WANTED: 1997 gold 1 litas coin. H. W. Oshrin, 2196 Opal Ridge, Vista, CA 92083. (760) 727-2831.

FOR SALE: 1998-dated 1 litas, 2 litai, 5 litai coins, 3-piece set UNC \$12.00.

1997 1 litas cupro-nickel, only 200,000 minted! UNC \$8.00.

1997 50 centų, 1998 10 centų, 1998 20 centų coins UNC all \$1.00 each.

1996 Atlanta summer Olympics silver proof 50 litų. Depicts naked Lithuanian basketball players! \$50.

1939 Republic of Lithuania State Lottery Ticket, 60 years old this year! \$10.00. Great conversation piece!

Write for my free price list of Lithuanian money and related items. Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224.

MUSEUM PUBLISHES BOOKLET

The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd., Chicago, IL 60629 has just published its 40-page "The Millennium Report," giving a history of the Museum, including a page about the Numismatic department. Write for your free copy, and enclose \$2.00 for p & h.



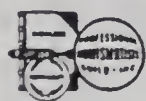
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